

Indications that Robins do not travel far are found, paradoxically, in the late dates of arrival at the outposts. Mr. J. A. Hill, of Murtoa, tells me he always looks for a few individuals to arrive in his district on 1st May. - This is as far inland as the species is found. Furthermore, there are places where a few birds arrive in winter, but do not remain long (see *The Emu*, vol. vi., p. 178), passing on to more suitable winter quarters.

Undoubtedly the largest numbers of Robins appear in the winter in the Western District of Victoria, which fringes the Otway Forest; in the open country south-west and south-east of Melbourne, which is adjacent to the highlands of the Plenty and Upper Yarra watersheds, as well as the Dandenong Ranges, and not far distant from both Cape Otway and South Gippsland; and in north-eastern Victoria, a large tract of flat and comparatively open country lying contiguous to the Buffalo Ranges and the Alps, the loftiest in the Robin region. It is significant, too, that the earliest date of the autumn appearance of the Flame-breasted Robin, recorded in my note-books, 20th March, 1899, was in the locality of Rutherglen, about 40 miles due north of Buffalo. If these Robins had come from Tasmania it would have taken many days to travel over 150 miles inland, and the records as a rule would be later than those obtained near the sea-board. But my notes show that in the north-east the birds appear earlier, if anything, than about Melbourne, and at the approach of spring they showed no anxiety to hasten away. The origin of the annual movement of the Flame-breasted Robins probably lies in the fact of their being ground-feeding birds, and when the first snow falls in their summer retreat they are forced to move to lower altitudes.

### Among the Birds of North-Western Victoria.

BY F. E. HOWE, ALBERT PARK, MELBOURNE.

(Read before the Bird Observers' Club, 21st October, 1908.)

LEAVING Melbourne by the 7.45 a.m. Adelaide train on Monday, 14th September, I arrived at Stawell, where Mr. J. A. Ross was to join me on the following evening.

Next morning we were up betimes and made a bee-line for the Ironbark Ranges. The bush was made beautiful by the bright yellow blossoms of the wattle and the delicate white flower of the *Brachyloma* (a heath-like plant), while the air was laden with their perfumes. The Honey-eaters were here in hundreds—aye, thousands—and nests were seen on every hand. Here were such forms as the Tawny-crowned (*Glycyphila fulvifrons*), Yellow-tufted (*Ptilotis auricomis*), Wattle-Bird (*Acanthochæra carunculata*), White-bearded (*Meliornis novæ-hollandiæ*), as well as the White-browed Babbler (*Pomatorhinus superciliosus*), all breeding.

Mr. A. J. Campbell, in his "Nests and Eggs," page 398, gives the position of the nest of *P. auricomis* as being placed in a sapling or small tree, but, although we found over a dozen, one only was placed in a tree (about 7 feet high), the balance being found very low down in the scrub, generally about 12 inches, and as low down as 6 inches from the ground. Many of them contained a pair of beautiful salmon-pink eggs, others young in all stages, and from not a few the young had already flown. The young of this bird are born blind and featherless; the gape is yellow, as is also the inside of the mouth, with the exception of two black spots on the lower mandible; the legs and feet are of a light flesh colour. At about three days old a dark grey down appears and the eyes are beginning to open. At about seven days old the yellow feathers of the abdomen are well defined, and the primaries in long blue quills. Young that appeared to be very little older had the primaries unfurling, and we calculated that they would leave the nest when about 15 or 16 days old. The irides of the adult are dark maroon, but in the nestling they were dark brown. I took one very beautiful pair of eggs, and whilst at the nest two birds appeared, and seemed greatly agitated at my presence. They were secured, and to my surprise both proved to be females; and it was strange that of all the Honey-eaters we got on the trip not one was a male. The Tawny-crowned Honey-eater (*Glycyphila fulvifrons*) also builds low down in the heath, and makes a very substantial and beautiful nest, laying therein two long fleshy-white eggs, with dark brown and purplish spots scattered meagrely about the larger end. A nest was found containing young about a day old; they were blind, and covered with dark-grey down; gape yellow, inside of mouth bright orange. When engaged in nest-building, we noticed they were always careful to alight about 10 yards from the nest, and, running along the ground, approach it in that fashion. The song of this bird is very pleasing, and consists of five liquid notes, generally uttered on the wing.

Wattle-Birds (*Acanthochuca carunculata*) were very plentiful, and nests containing young and eggs were noticed. A nest with young about a week old was built in a fork about 6 feet high. The quills on the primaries, about an inch long and of a blue colour, were not yet broken; the eyes were just opening. They were clothed with a dark-grey down, while the inside of the mouth and the gape were both yellow. We were amused while watching a Wattle-Bird to see it give chase to a Raven, uttering harsh croaks and plucking the larger bird by the tail. Probably the Raven was after the young.

Leaving Stawell on the 15th, at 10.20 p.m., we journeyed on to Tailem Bend, in South Australia, arriving there at 6 a.m. The weather here was fine and frosty, and consequently very

cold. Breakfast not being obtainable till 8 o'clock, we shouldered our guns and walked briskly to a patch of mallee scrub distant about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Here we found the Grey Shrike-Thrush (*Collyriocincla harmonica*), White-winged Chough (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*), Yellow-plumed Honey-eater (*Ptilotis ornata*), Restless Flycatcher (*Sisura iniquita*), Black-winged Crow-Shrike (*Strepera melanoptera*), Ground-Dove (*Geopelia tranquilla*), Striped Brown Hawk (*Hieracidea berigora*), and many other forms. A nest of *Pomatorhinus superciliosus* was found to hold three young ones that were blind and featherless, with gape and inside of mouth yellow.

We left Tailem Bend at 11.30 a.m., bound for Pinnaroo, 86 miles distant and only 3 miles from the border fence of Victoria, arriving there after 6 p.m. Here we were met by "Mallee-Bird" (Mr. Charles M'Lennan). Whilst Mr. M'Lennan was harnessing up next morning we found many nests of the White-browed Babbler (*Pomatorhinus superciliosus*) just at the rear of the hotel. They were all built low down in the mallee. One nest contained four young ones about 10 days old; gape and inside of mouth yellow; quills or primaries about 2 inches long, with feathers just unfurling; eyebrow very conspicuous. We reckoned they would be fully fledged in about four days. Even after they are fledged they continue to occupy the nest. Later on, while we were examining two more nests, young birds flew out, uttering notes very like those of their parents.

On the drive out from Pinnaroo we saw great numbers of the Black-winged Crow-Shrike (*Strepera melanoptera*)—one lot of about 70—and secured a bird for identification. The feet and bill were black and the irides were bright orange. The bird measured about 18 inches in length. We found them nesting in the mallee, and three nests contained two, two, and three eggs respectively. We also found a nest of the Wattle-cheeked Honey-eater (*Ptilotis cratitia*), quite close to the track and placed in a wire-bush (*Acacia*) about 2 feet from the ground. Outwardly it was composed of bark, decorated with spiders' cocoons, in some cases an inch long, and lined with fine grasses. It contained a pair of very light-coloured eggs finely and sparingly spotted with brown and lilac. During our sojourn we noticed many pairs of this very elegant Honey-eater. We secured one (a female), and the purple of the gape gave it a very beautiful appearance. On the 19th a nest of this species was found about half built, the position chosen being about 5 feet high in a small pine in dense broom scrub (country they appear to be very partial to, affording as it does such good protection), and it was ready for eggs as we passed on our way home on 25th September.

Our camp was at Hawk Plain, Carina, Vic., and many forms were found nesting here, notably the Owlet Nightjar (*Ægotheles nova-hollandiæ*), Black-breasted Plover (*Zonifer tricolor*), Black-

backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus destructor*), Yellow-plumed Honey-eater (*Ptilotis ornata*), Spiny-cheeked Honey-eater (*Acanthochera rufigularis*), Red-throated Thickhead (*Pachycephala gilberti*), Chestnut-rumped Ground-Wren (*Hylacola cauta*), *Drymaudus*, Black-winged Crow-Shrike (*Strepera melanoptera*), Bell-Bird (*Oreoica cristata*), and Yellow-rumped Pardalote (*Pardalotus xanthopygius*), the latter just burrowing. Many others were observed, and in the Acacias on the plains the Black-backed Wren (*Malurus melanotus*), Purple-backed Wren (*M. assimilis*), and Redthroat (*Sericornis brunnea*) were very plentiful. The last-named has a very pleasant song, reminding one of that of the *Chthonicola*, but of greater volume.

On the 20th we left Hawk Plain to travel slowly to Kow Plains, about 20 miles due east and 32 miles from the border. After travelling about a mile and a half a nest of the Scrub-Robin (*Drymaudus brunneopygius*) was found, with the female sitting on a young one about four days old that had evidently been born blind and featherless. The eyes were not yet opened to their fullest extent, and were black; the gape was of a creamy-white colour, while the inside of the mouth was yellow; primaries were in long blue quills; the feathers of the head were just breaking, as were also those on the rump, which were very rufous; the feathers along the abdomen were white and well developed; feet and bill light horn. This bird was very plentiful all through this country, but owing to the density of the scrub and their very shy disposition they were more often heard than seen. It is essentially a ground bird, seldom perching in the scrub, and then only at a height of a few feet. They have a habit of elevating the tail (after the fashion of the Cuckoo) with a slow and graceful motion, generally when uttering the call, which consists of a soft whistle-like note, sweet but monotonous; when alarmed they emit a high-pitched double note, and a note they used when we were about the nest sounded like "Chair-r-r-r-r." To find the nest is very difficult. The female is slightly smaller than the male, and this appears to be the only difference.

After travelling a few hours we camped for lunch on a small plain. These plains are covered with wattle (*Acacia*) and turpentine-bush, and here we again met *Sericornis brunnea* and *Malurus melanotus*, and we were fortunate in securing a male of the latter variety just assuming the summer plumage.

A nest of the Bell-Bird (*Oreoica cristata*) was found, containing three eggs and three brown-coloured, long-haired grubs. Two other nests of this species were found—one at Kow Plains, containing two eggs, and the other at Stawell with three eggs, and in each case a corresponding number of grubs with them.

The country we traversed was mostly mallee, and the route



was broken here and there by a pine ridge and then a plain, interspersed with tracts of porcupine grass (*Triodia*) and in the latter we again saw *Glycyphila fulvifrons*. On a plain we were fortunate in securing a male of the Black-eared Cuckoo (*Mesocalius palliolatus*). On dissecting this bird we found it crammed full of grubs, &c.

When we were within two miles of the homestead the character of the country altered considerably, and after driving through a fine belt of pines, the mallee (instead of the small, stunted stuff we had seen for upwards of a hundred miles) assumed the proportions of box or peppermint, and here we saw the Musk and Purple-crowned Lorikeets (*Glossopsittacus concinnus* and *G. porphyrocephalus*) in flocks of hundreds.

Next morning we split our party in two, Mr. Ross accompanying the boundary-rider, while Mr. M'Lennan and I visited a fine sheet of water called Mumble. We identified *Pardalotus ornatus*, *Cracticus destructor*, *Acanthiza uropygialis*, *Zonifer tricolor*, *Corcorax melanorhamphus*, *Astur cinereus*, *Artamus sordidus*, and *Anthus australis*, all nesting. I also found a nest of the White-browed Tree-creeper (*Climacteris superciliosa*) (?), which contained three fresh eggs, and secured the female for identification. We saw many nests building of *Acanthochæra rufigularis*, and in the distance we heard the call-note of *Pachycephala gilberti*.

Reaching the water we were agreeably surprised to see about a dozen White-headed Stilts (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) and three or four varieties of Ducks, and on the other side a bird which I think was the Dottrel (*Peltohyas australis*), but the distance was too great to identify it. A pair of White-necked Herons (*Notophoyx pacifica*) were soaring above the water, and a dingo was seen to steal into the fringing mallee.

On reaching the homestead that night, Mr. Ross triumphantly placed two birds in my hands, one of them resembling the female of the Rufous Song-Lark (*Cinctorhamphus rufescens*). Mr. M'Lennan has observed this bird on a few occasions, and says that it is very silent, and has only been seen singly. The other was a *Calamanthus*, and if not *campestris* is a new variety. The head is rufous, with dark streaks, and the eyebrow is white; breast and under surface creamy-buff, streaked with brown; under tail coverts dark brown with white tips; it measures  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches long, bill  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lines, wing 2 inches 1 line, tarsus 9 lines. This bird was found in the salt-bush country, and appears to be fairly plentiful. They were very hard to flush, and on account of their agility exceedingly hard to secure. Mr. Ross informs me that he first saw them running rapidly from bush to bush with tail erect; now and then they would rise to the top of a bush, uttering a warble-like song, and dart down again before he could discharge his gun.

On the 22nd we left Kow Plains *en route* to Carina, and before leaving the larger mallee noticed nests of the Whiteface (*Xerophila leucopsis*) and Brown Tree-creeper (*Climacteris scandens*), both containing young, and nests of the Striped Brown Hawk (*Hieracidea berigora*) and Mallee-Parrakeet (*Barnardius barnardi*), containing four eggs and five eggs respectively. A nest of the White-winged Chough (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*) made of the excrement of cattle was placed in a mallee.

At Pinnaroo Well (10 miles from Kow Plains) we camped for lunch and close handy found a nest of *Zonifer tricolor* containing four eggs. In every nest of this species noticed, as usual, the points of the eggs were inturned. We found two nests of *Podargus strigoides* (?), and very substantial structures they were, being composed of green twigs of the turpentine-bush, and were fully 5 or 6 inches in depth externally, but the egg cavity was only about 1½ inches. The eggs were very much smaller than usual in both cases, and measured 1 inch 8 lines in length by only 1 1/24 inches in breadth. The bird also seems to differ (we were within a few feet of it), appearing much lighter in the plumage in general, and it was unfortunate for us that we were unable to obtain a specimen.

As we crossed a plain the warbling of the Redthroat (*Sericornis brunnea*) was heard, and the bird was flushed from some fallen pines and dead bushes, and the nest, just started, was found. They prefer to build in the grasses that shoot through the dead turpentine-bush, and appear to be very local, as we found two or three old nests quite adjacent to the new one. We spent an hour watching a pair of Scrub-Robins, and found the hole scooped out preparatory to nest-making.

I forgot to mention that on the 17th Mr. M'Lennan flushed a Striped Brown Hawk from its nest. We examined it on the 18th, when it contained one egg; the second egg was deposited on or about the 23rd, or five days later (the weather in the interim was extremely cold); the eggs were quite fresh, with the female sitting and evidently laying. On the 19th it was looked at and contained only one egg.

Whilst strolling through the scrubs on the 24th a female Chestnut-backed Ground-Bird (*Cinclosoma castanonotum*) was flushed from a nest prettily situated in the heart of a mallee-bush; it contained one egg, which she subsequently deserted. The call-note of this species is a long-drawn and feeble whistle, and is exactly like that of *C. punctatum*.

On the 24th we left camp and walked into Pinnaroo, and collected skins of *Ptilotis cratitia*, *P. ornata*, *Glycyphila albifrons*, *Pardalotus xanthopygius*, and *Chalcococcyx basalis*.

It may be stated the weather was exceedingly unfavourable for work, and the strong northerly winds played havoc with the Honey-eaters' nests, many of *Ptilotis ornata* and one of

*Plectorhynchus lanceolata* being blown down. At Taillem Bend the mallee was well out in blossom, and the Yellow-plumed Honey-eaters (*Ptilotis ornata*) were busy nest-making, as many as twelve nests being observed.

Appended is a list of the birds identified during the trip :—

Name.	Locality.
1. <i>Uroaëtus audax</i> ..	.. Kow Plains, Vic.
2. <i>Elanus axillaris</i> ..	.. "
3. <i>Hieracidea berigora</i>	.. "
4. <i>H. orientalis</i> ..	.. Stawell, Vic.
5. <i>Cerchneis cenchroides</i>	.. Carina, Vic.
6. <i>Astur cinereus</i> ..	.. Kow Plains, Vic.
7. <i>Ninox boobook</i> ..	.. Stawell, Vic.
8. <i>Corvus coronoides</i>	.. Carina, Vic.
9. <i>Corone australis</i> ..	.. Stawell, Vic.
10. <i>Sirepera (sp.)?</i> ..	.. "
11. <i>S. melanoptera</i> ..	.. Carina, Vic., and Pinnaroo, S.A.
12. <i>Corcorax melanorhamphus</i>	.. General
13. <i>Oriolus viridis</i> ..	.. Stawell
14. <i>Grallina picata</i> ..	.. "
15. <i>Collyriocincla harmonica</i>	.. "
16. <i>Graucalus melanops</i>	.. Carina
17. <i>Lalage tricolor</i> ..	.. "
18. <i>Micræca fascians</i>	.. "
19. <i>Petræca leggii</i> ..	.. Stawell
20. <i>P. goodenovi</i> ..	.. Carina and Kow Plains
21. <i>P. bicolor</i> ..	.. Carina
22. <i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	.. Stawell
23. <i>M. melanotus</i> ..	.. Carina
24. <i>M. assimilis</i> ..	.. "
25. <i>Rhipidura albiscapa</i>	.. General
26. <i>R. tricolor</i> ..	.. "
27. <i>Sisura inquieta</i> ..	.. "
28. <i>Chthonicola sagittata</i>	.. Stawell
29. <i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	.. "
30. <i>A. pyrrhopygia</i> ..	.. Taillem Bend, S.A.
31. <i>A. lineata</i> ..	.. Stawell
32. <i>A. uropygialis</i> ..	.. Carina and Kow Plains
33. <i>A. chrysorrhoa</i> ..	.. Stawell
34. <i>A. reguloides</i> ..	.. "
35. <i>Sericornis brunnea</i>	.. Carina and Kow Plains
36. <i>Cinclosoma punctatum</i>	.. Stawell
37. <i>C. castanonotum</i> ..	.. Carina
38. <i>Drymaædus brunneopygius</i>	.. Carina and Kow Plains
39. <i>Hylacola pyrrhopygia</i>	.. Stawell
40. <i>H. cauta</i> ..	.. Carina
41. <i>Pomatorhinus temporalis</i>	.. Stawell
42. <i>P. superciliosus</i> ..	.. Carina
43. <i>Cinclorhamphus rufescens</i>	.. Kow Plains
44. <i>Calamanthus campestris</i> (?)	.. "
45. <i>Ephthianura albifrons</i>	.. "
46. <i>Xerophila leucopsis</i>	.. "
47. <i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	.. Carina
48. <i>G. leuconota</i> ..	.. Stawell

Name.	Locality.
49. <i>Cracticus destructor</i>	.. Stawell and Carina
50. <i>Oreoica cristata</i> ..	.. "
51. <i>Eopsaltria australis</i>	.. Stawell
52. <i>Pachycephala gutturalis</i>	.. Kow Plains
53. <i>P. rufiventris</i> ..	.. Stawell
54. <i>P. gilberti</i> ..	.. Carina and Kow Plains
55. <i>Climacteris scandens</i>	.. Kow Plains
56. <i>C. superciliosa</i> (?)	.. "
57. <i>C. leucophæa</i> ..	.. Stawell
58. <i>Sittella pileata</i> ..	.. Kow Plains
59. <i>Melithreptus lunulatus</i> (?)	.. Carina
60. <i>Plectorhynchus lanceolatus</i>	.. Carina and Taillem Bend
61. <i>Glycyphila fulvifrons</i>	.. Stawell and Kow Plains
62. <i>G. albifrons</i> ..	.. Carina
63. <i>Meliphaga phrygia</i>	.. Stawell
64. <i>Ptilotis fusca</i> ..	.. "
65. <i>P. chrysops</i> ..	.. "
66. <i>P. leucotis</i> ..	.. General
67. <i>P. auricomis</i> ..	.. Stawell
68. <i>P. cratitia</i> ..	.. Carina
69. <i>P. penicillata</i> ..	.. Stawell
70. <i>P. ornata</i> ..	.. Kow Plains, Carina, Taillem Bend
71. <i>Meliornis novæ-hollandiæ</i>	.. Stawell
72. <i>Myzantha garrula</i>	.. "
73. <i>M. flavigula</i> ..	.. Carina
74. <i>Acanthochæra carunculata</i>	.. Stawell
75. <i>A. rufigularis</i> ..	.. Stawell, Carina, and Kow Plains
76. <i>Pardalotus ornatus</i>	.. Carina and Kow Plains
77. <i>P. punctatus</i> ..	.. Stawell
78. <i>P. xanthopygius</i> ..	.. Carina
79. <i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	.. Taillem Bend
80. <i>Petrochelidon ariel</i>	.. "
81. <i>Anthus australis</i> ..	.. General
82. <i>Artamus superciliosus</i>	.. Carina and Kow Plains
83. <i>A. personatus</i> ..	.. "
84. <i>A. sordidus</i> ..	.. Stawell
85. <i>Staganopleura guttata</i>	.. "
86. <i>Podargus</i> (sp.) (?)	.. Carina
87. <i>Eurostopus albigularis</i>	.. ,, (heard at night)
88. <i>Ægotheles novæ-hollandiæ</i>	.. "
89. <i>Dacalo gigas</i> ..	.. Stawell
90. <i>Cuculus pallidus</i> ..	.. "
91. <i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	.. Carina
92. <i>Mesocalius palliolatus</i>	.. "
93. <i>Chalcococcyx basalis</i>	.. "
94. <i>Glossopsittacus concinnus</i>	.. Stawell and Carina
95. <i>G. porphyrocephalus</i>	.. Kow Plains
96. <i>G. pusillus</i> ..	.. "
97. <i>Cacatua galerita</i> ..	.. Carina
98. <i>C. leadbeateri</i> ..	.. Kow Plains
99. <i>Platycercus eximius</i>	.. Stawell
100. <i>Barnardius barnardi</i>	.. Kow Plains
101. <i>Psephotus hæmatonotus</i>	.. "
102. <i>P. multicolor</i> ..	.. "



Name.	Locality.
103. <i>Geopelia tranquilla</i>	.. Tailem Bend
104. <i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	.. Carina
105. <i>Microtribonyx ventralis</i>	.. Kow Plains (Mumble)
106. <i>Zonifer tricolor</i> ..	.. Kow Plains and Carina
107. <i>Peltohyas australis</i> (?)	.. Kow Plains (Mumble)
108. <i>Himantopus leucocephalus</i>	.. " "
109. <i>Notophox pacifica</i>	.. " "
110. <i>Anas superciliosa</i>	.. " "
111. <i>Nettion castaneum</i>	.. " "
112. <i>Nyroca australis</i> ..	.. " "

## Notes on Birds Found Breeding near Mackay, North Queensland.

BY E. M. CORNWALL:

### PART II.

IT was with a considerable amount of surprised delight that I first heard in this district the guttural note of the Black Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus quoyi*). At about sundown I was quietly working my way through a bit of thick jungle just above the margin of the mangroves when the note was sounded within a few yards of me. I tried hard to obtain a good view of the bird, but it was shy, and kept so well screened with thick foliage that a mere shadowy glimpse was all I could obtain. However, very shortly afterwards I had ample opportunity of completing the identification, and found that the bird is not by any means a rarity in this district. They love the muddy fastnesses of the mangroves, and to observe them "at home" one must be prepared to put up with much discomfort. When the tides are neap the mangrove flats are sometimes dry for days at a time; then they are comparatively firm, and walking is not difficult, but when the big tides flood them every day they are veritable quagmires, and one flounders knee-deep at every step, whilst countless myriads of sand-flies and mosquitoes add to the general discomfort. Black Butcher-Birds are very local in their habits. Once a pair is located they may always be found within a very short radius. They nest year after year in the same locality, and the remains of several seasons' nests may be found in the adjoining trees. Hitherto I have not noticed a brown specimen in this district. Nests, each containing three eggs, were noted on 11th and 13th November. Once only have I found *C. quoyi* nesting away from the mangroves. The nest was then placed amongst a parasitic growth in a swamp tea-tree, and contained three fresh eggs. In an adjoining tree were the remains of the previous season's nest.

The Black-throated Butcher-Bird (*Cracticus nigrigularis*) is a